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ABSTRACT

One objective of the International Study of Achievement in Written Composition was to develop an instrument that could explore the relationships between instructional variables and educational results. Three levels of specificity were aimed at: (1) broad and general characteristics of the instructional process; (2) specific dimensions of native language instruction; and (3) instructional variables. A review of the literature on critical variables in writing instruction revealed that prewriting activities (activities focusing student attention on the questions of how to organize a text and how to generate ideas, on problem solving categories, and on rules for systematicly treating a subject) clearly had positive effects on writing. Those variables with doubtful effects included the workshop/writing lab approach, group work, the reading models approach, the methods that lean heavily on individual conferences between teacher and student, the individualized approaches, and the approach in which the writing frequency is stepped up without special assistance. The questionnaire that was finally developed contained questions on prewriting instruction, types of tasks to be written, characteristics of writing instruction, materials and aids, and feedback. (The questionnaire is appended.) (HOD)

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ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF CRITICAL VARIABLES IN WRITTEN COMPOSITION INSTRUCTION

Paper presented at the 72nd Annual Convention of the National Council of Teachers of English
Washington, D.C.
November 19-24, 1982

Hildo Wesdorp

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On the identification of critical variables in written composition instruction

1. INTRODUCTION

The International Study of Achievement in Written Composition, which we are discussing today has two main objectives. In the first place it will attempt to map out carefully the curriculum for written composition in the participating countries. We hope this descriptive part will lead to the exchange of ideas on instructional practice, the choice of tasks for writing, the selection of evaluation techniques and so on. In the second place it is an exploratory study: we are trying to explore the relationships between instructional variables and educational results. In other words, we want to find out what instructional techniques do really have some impact on writing achievement.

For both the descriptive and the explorative part of the study we need an instrument for the description or measurement of those variables that seem to be of importance. The questions I try to answer in this presentation are: what is the best way to describe or measure the instructional variables we are interested in? at what level of generality or specificity should we aim?

2. THREE LEVELS OF SPECIFICITY

A. Broad and general characterizations of the instructional proces

The description or measurement of 'what happens in the classroom' can be done at several levels of abstraction. We can look for (A) very broad and general characterizations of the instructional process. The literature on general educational issues gives us examples of such descriptive systems. I want to give you one illustration. Bloom (1976) describes the quality of instruction with the aid of only four general variables or 'elements of instruction', as he calls them. These are *cues*,

participation, *reinforcement*, and *feedback/correctives*.

The *cues* include instructions as to what is to be learned as well as the directions as to what the learner is to do in the learning process. Cues may differ not only in the form in which they are presented (verbal, visual), but also in strength. Bloom found eight studies that made observations of the cues and computed correlations between the qualities of the cues and the final learning level of groups of students. (The relation is about +.38). In a few studies the qualities of the cues were correlated with the gains in achievement of groups of students (The median correlation was +.53). Bloom estimates that 14 percent of the variance in the achievement of groups of students is accounted for by the qualities of the cues. Most learning theories agree that *reinforcement* makes learning effective. Teachers very often reward or reinforce the learning of their students. They differ in the variety of reinforcement they use, and in the amount of reinforcement they give to different individuals. Reinforcers need not always be administered by the teachers. The social group, the peers, or other adults may also supply them. Bloom found ten studies on the relation between reinforcement and achievement. The median correlation was +.25, indicating that only about 6 percent of the achievement variation between classes can be related to the rewards available. The third general element of instruction according to Bloom is *participation*. Students must participate or practice; they must show some active involvement although participation need not be overt and observable. Now there are many strategies for ensuring participation. Bloom reports on the findings of twenty studies that included very precise measurement of participation and practice. The correlation with either final achievement (for class-groups) or gain in achievement was very similar, about +.27. For individual participation the correlation with final achievement was +.42; the correlation with gains in achievement was +.58. In general, 20 percent of variation in achievement of

individuals is accounted for by their participation in the classroom learning process. *Feedback/correctives* are the fourth element of instruction. Bloom states that there is almost no evidence in the research literature which deals directly with feedback and correctives. However, the feedback-corrective procedure must be very important.

B. Specific dimensions of mother-tongue instruction

We are interested in the description and measurement of what happens during mother-tongue classes, especially during writing classes. We could therefore try to use B) a general descriptive system, that fits in with mother-tongue education in general. The Dutch mother-tongue specialist Ten Brinke has suggested a general descriptive system to characterize the instruction of mother-tongue teachers. Ten Brinke (1976) discerns five main dimensions. In the following outline I include more information about his descriptive system (see appendix 1 for further detail).

Main dimension I (Direction and technical properties of text) refers to whether a text is produced or received, whether there is interaction, and whether the text produced or received is oral or written. Ten Brinke presents three subscales on which the objectives of the teacher can be rated for producing as against receiving abilities, or for oral as against written abilities, and for interactionality. *Main dimension II* refers to the subject of the verbal behaviour. All of the teacher's objectives refer to particular subjects. Ten Brinke presents a classification system for the subjects the teacher uses. *Main dimension III* is called 'approach' and it consists of seven subscales, on which the teacher's approach can be rated for the following variables that characterize the instructional procedures of the teacher: a) Disciplinarity. An approach to a subject is considered disciplinary if it is explicit and systematic. b) Personalness. Approaches can vary from personal, i.e., not open to objective criticism, to non-personal or

objective. c) Emotionality. This sub-dimension refers to the extent to which emotions play a part in the approach to writing (and other skills). d) Fictionality and Non-fictionality. The texts students are required to receive ('understand') or produce may be of a non-fictional or a fictional nature, or may lie somewhere in between. e) Creativity. The two extreme values of the scale representing the classifications relevant to this sub-dimension, are 'elaborating' and 'creative'. f) Criticalness. The values within this sub-dimension range from 'critical' to 'accepting'. g) Correctness. The term correctness is used here in a restricted sense: it refers solely to 'lingual correctness'. Texts can be incorrect because they contain one or more wrong words or wrong grammatical constructions. As *main dimension IV* Ten Brinke introduces two miscellaneous sub-dimensions, 'complexity' and 'age of the text'. Complex objectives are defined as objectives having a high position in the hierarchy of (Bloom's) taxonomy of educational objectives. The sub-dimension 'age of the text' is a trivial category, that only applies to reading; does the teacher read historical texts with the class and how often? *Main dimension V* is the dimension that has received most attention in Dutch discussions on the teaching of mother-tongue skills. This dimension is called 'functionality'. It refers to the extent to which the objectives the teacher wants to achieve with his students reflect their needs in normal life. Ten Brinke speaks of 'the normal functional nature' of the objectives. The opposite of 'normal functional objectives' is 'scholastic functional objectives'. They are objectives that have no clear relation to the student's needs in normal life. They are serving a scholastic purpose. Examples of scholastic functional objectives are 1) writing essays by giving students all kinds of themes (topics) which do not really interest them and which have no communicative function, but are only given 'to be corrected by the teacher'. 2) Parsing sentences according to the traditional grammatical categories.

Ten Brinke's category-system is rather global. Although there are 14 scales along which the teacher's instructional behaviour can be rated, some of them are overlapping and others are not independent. It means that some options on some scales make some options on other scales impossible. We could say that Ten Brinke's system is a general or global descriptive system; but it is also specific because it classifies the behaviour of mother-tongue teachers.

C. 'Instructional variables'

There is one more option left for those who want to describe and measure writing-instruction. That is C) the measurement of the many 'didactic' or 'instructional' variables writing-teachers (and researchers of writing-instruction) seem to see as important. It is a very pragmatic and also a very concrete way of describing what happens. But it seems very natural to use the terms teachers and researchers have used to describe the 'object' they are interested in. To find out what kind of variables seem to be of some importance I have reviewed the literature on research on composing. I report on that in the following review (3). But first I should like to offer a comparison of the three levels of description mentioned above.

General educational categories, such as Bloom's four elements of instruction, are too general for our purpose. Of course we could keep the four elements in mind, because in our Written Composition Study it might be possible to correlate data on the four elements with the final learning level (that is, the achievement in written composition) of our groups. But the four categories are too broad and they are difficult for the informants we shall use to understand. Because we need data on about one hundred classes for every country, it seems impossible to visit all the participating classes and rate the instruction on Bloom's categories. We must try to use the teacher as our informant. So we shall have to use questionnaires. Teachers cannot be asked to rate themselves on the proposed categories.

The more specific categories Ten Brinke proposes are also too difficult to be used by teachers. Of course they could try to score their own classroom behaviour on the 14 scales, but so far we do not know much about the reliability and validity of self-ratings on Ten Brinke's scales. There is another drawback connected with the use of the Ten Brinke scales: are they good descriptions for colleagues who are interested in the descriptive part of the study? Do they really describe instruction in a way that 'communicates' with the interested teachers in other countries? Although Ten Brinke explains the meaning of his scales thoroughly in his book, it is probable that many professionals and lay people do not yet know about the scales. Therefore I would question the communicative value of such a system of description.

The very specific categories teachers use themselves while describing their lessons, and the categories researchers on writing instruction often use (see 3) seem to be very concrete categories. They have the communicative value which is being sought. But, as they are generated by the people who know about the instructional process, the categories might be too specific or too detailed. Many of the specific or detailed variables might turn out to be parts of *clusters* of instructional variables or parts of underlying, more important, variables. But as long as it is not yet known what clusters might appear in the analyses, it is better to stick to the specific categories. A teacher questionnaire on instructional variables has therefore been developed. This questionnaire makes use of the specific terms the teachers and researchers themselves use.

3. A REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON CRITICAL VARIABLES IN WRITING INSTRUCTION

What are the instructional variables researchers have studied thus far and what are the general results of their efforts? Two types of research are relevant: in the first place there are

investigations which attempt to account for the 'instructional background' of students with good writing results, sometimes in contrast with students with poor results. Of this type I found ten investigations. In the second place there are very many quasi-experimental studies, mainly dating from the sixties and seventies, which were all aimed at determining the effects of one or more (experimental) instructional variables. I found 158 of this type. In the next few paragraphs I shall investigate the results of both types of research.

Results of the first type of research. The differences found in such investigations between the instructional characteristics of good and poor students could point up possible causal relationships between instructional and student achievement. The ten investigations under consideration here lead to a number of conclusions concerning the background variables that show a clear correlation with the student's written composition ability. The following generalizations appear justified. Good writers spend more time and attention on writing tasks. They show more conscious attention and a more structured approach to writing (which may have been developed either through instruction or through independent learning). The degree of individualization of the instructional process also seems important. Good writers turn out to have had more opportunities for discussion of their written products. Good writers also show more audience-awareness and are more goal-directed. Instruction of good writers is characterized by explicit attention to the development of content and organization. Finally, the method of giving feedback also turns out to be important. The discussion of compositions during and after writing is more frequent among good writers, who also pay more attention to revising their compositions.

Results of the second type of research. This type of research deals with quasi-experiments on the effectiveness of instructional variables. As I found 158 studies of this type, I had to order

them in some way. I did that according to the experimental variables under consideration. In total, 18 groups of investigations are distinguished, each directed at one particular instructional variable. Some variables have received ample attention from researchers: about two thirds of all investigations have been aimed at various pre-writing activities, feedback-techniques and various 'grammatical' methods. The results of the numerous investigations are summarized in appendix 2. The conclusions are given according to each instructional variable.

What seem to be the promising instructional techniques, according to the research studies reviewed here? In order to answer this question, two factors must be considered. First, it is important to determine what proportion of all experiments directed at certain instructional techniques had a positive result, i.e. what experiments showed that the variable in question had a positive effect on composition ability. Secondly, the number of experiments in which such an effect is shown is also seen as important. A large number of investigations with positive results is, of course, more convincing than a smaller number of investigations with positive results. Taking this into account, the following conclusions may be drawn.

Clearly positive effects are shown to be the result of various prewriting activities, i.e. activities focusing student attention on the question of how to organize a text, how to generate ideas, on problem-solving categories, and on rules for systematically treating a subject. Among the pre-writing activities, the pre-writing discussion about the composition task is the most well-known and this task receives so much attention that a special paragraph has been devoted to it. Positive results are also achieved by using stimuli (writing assignments) that fit the individual student. Of course, the question remains whether education must always aim for writing tasks that 'fit' the

students. It is, of course, possible that the educational goals may not match the general preference of the students. Nevertheless, the fact of the positive results of investigations using stimuli chosen by or personally experienced by the student is a factor that should not be discounted in the teaching of composition. Transformational sentence-combining exercises also appear to have a positive influence on writing ability. In a fairly large number of experiments such exercises have not only turned out to show an abundantly clear positive effect on a student's sentence structure - a result that was to be expected - but also on the general quality of the written material. Clearly positive results were also found in experiments in which the effects of peer-evaluation were studied. The great practical advantage of this approach, which lightens the extensive evaluation task of the teacher, is obvious. But apart from that, the effect of this approach on writing abilities are, to a large extent, positive. This effect may be explained by educational and communicative theories. The revision of a text, i.e. rewriting after comments by the teacher, also has shown positive effects on the quality of the written material.

Doubtful effects. Most of the experimental variables discussed in the literature do not show very convincing results. In the majority of experiments, a fairly large group of instructional variables do not show positive results. This does not prove conclusively that these instructional variables are irrelevant. It does mean, though, that the positive expectations that were held on theoretical grounds have not been fulfilled in the course of the investigation. Or to put it differently, there is not much evidence, so far, to favor these experimental variables. Of course, the validity of such a statement depends on the, sometimes questionable research designs.

What are the experimental variables with doubtful effects? They are: the workshop/writing-lab approach, group work, the reading models approach, the methods that lean heavily on individual

conferences between teacher and student or tutor and student, the individualized approaches, and the approach in which the writing frequency is stepped up without special assistance.

Limited or no effects. Finally, there are a number of instructional variables for which research has conclusively shown that they have very limited or no influence on composition ability, despite originally high expectations. For example, the general effect of various forms of teacher-evaluation has been disappointing. The way in which the teacher gives the evaluation (positive or negative and corrective, extensive or concise, detailed or global) seems to make little difference. The group of investigations on teacher-evaluation does not offer us a clear direction The question, 'which form of teacher-feedback works best?' remains unanswered until now.
Equally lacking in convincing results are investigations into the effects of various approaches based on grammar. It turns out that the 'traditional grammar approach' clearly has little effect in comparison with approaches advocating a more direct training of language abilities. The use of 'structural grammar' does not show convincing results either, as is the case with the use of 'transformational generative grammar'.

4. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE RESEARCH ON CRITICAL VARIABLES

In my introduction I stated that our main problem was how to construct an instrument to describe the instructional practices of mother-tongue teachers, especially with respect to writing instruction. My conclusion is, that we should aim at a questionnaire for teachers, in which the variables as mentioned in the review of research play an important role. As we try to describe instructional practice, we should use the terms that practitioners (i.e. teachers) use themselves. Therefore, we have developed a questionnaire in which the following parts appear:

Part 1 *Questions on pre-writing instruction*
In this part all kinds of supporting or preparatory exercises appear, like exercises in spelling and punctuation, in the development of organization, in imagery, stylistics, making language concrete and illustrative, etc.

Part 2 *Questions on types of tasks to be written*
In this part the different writing tasks, which might be used in writing instruction appear: personal letters, circulars, letters of advice, etc. Also there are questions on the types of topics used: can students come up with topics themselves or are topics prescribed by the teacher?

Part 3 *Questions on characteristics of writing instruction*
In this part we try to find out how the teacher organizes instructional activities: is writing instruction highly structured? Does the teacher help the students by discussing the topics? May students gather information before they start writing? Also included are questions on the time spent on writing in class and as homework.

Part 4 *Questions on materials and aids*
This part tries to find out what aids the teacher uses: is a textbook used? Are collections of essays or published criteria on 'good writing' used?, etc.

Part 5 *Questions on feedback*
In this part the questions ask who is giving feedback (the teacher, a tutor, peers), when it is given, and in what form the feedback is given, etc.

Appendix 3 gives the questionnaire in more detail.

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Bloom, B.G. *Human Characteristics and School Learning.* New York, etc., McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976.

Brinke, S. Ten *The Complete Mother-tongue Curriculum.* Groningen/London, Wolters-Noordhoff/Longman, 1976.

Appendix 1: Ten Brinke's system of dimensions for the description of mother-tongue instruction

I Direction and technical properties of text

1. Direction (text-producing vs. text-receiving-abilities emphasized)
2. Oral/Written (oral vs. written abilities emphasized)
3. Interactionality

II Subject

4. Subject (classification according to the subjects the teacher's objectives refer to: a Symbolics b Empirics c Esthetics d Synnoetics e Ethics f Synoptics. Other proposed distinction: a forbidden subjects (sex, politics) b not-forbidden subjects)

III Approach

5. Disciplinarity (Emphasis on explicitness and systematic approach)
6. Personalness (Emphasis on personal approach, i.e. not open to objective criticism)
7. Emotionality (The extent to which emotions play a part)
8. Fictionality and Non-Fictionality (What kinds of texts are the students to understand or produce)
9. Creativeness
10. Criticalness
11. Correctness (= emphasis on lingual correctness)

IV Miscellaneous

12. Complexity (place in Bloom's taxonomy: 1 knowledge 2 comprehension 3 application 4 analysis 5 synthesis 6 evaluation)
13. Age of the text (emphasis on historical vs. modern texts)

V Functionality

14. Functionality (the extent to which the objectives reflect the student's needs in normal life)

Appendix 2 : The effectiveness of 18 instructional variables on composition ability

Instructional variable	primary or secondary focus	Total	Positive effect	No effect	Negative effect	Conclusion
Pre-writing discussion	p*	7	4	3		Pre-writing discussion generally seems to have positive effects
	s					
Other pre-writing activities	p	12	10	1	1	Pre-writing activities, directed at organization, do have an effect, as is the case with training in heuristic procedures
	s	1		1		
Workshop/ writing lab.	p	5	2	3		Results from writing lab. and workshop approaches are, on the whole, not convincing
	s	2	1	1		
Group work	p	4	2	2		The effects of group work are, on the whole, rather doubtful
	s	6	2	4		
Reading models approach	p	9	3	6		The superiority of the reading models approach cannot be demonstrated in most cases
	s	4	1	1	2	
Individual conferences	p	6	2	3	1	The effectiveness of individual conferences with teacher or tutor is not demonstrated very convincingly
	s	6	2	4		
Individualized approach	p	10	4	5	1	Individualized methods may, under certain circumstances, show positive results, but in the majority of cases this is not the case
	s	1	1			
Peer-evaluation	p	16	8	7	1	Peer-evaluation is a very promising instructional technique which can lead to positive results in many cases
	s	4	3	1		
Teacher-feedback: 'tone'	p	9	2	6	1	The positive effect of giving only positive feedback has not been convincingly demonstrated for students in secondary education
	s					
Teacher-feedback: extensiveness	p	10	2	7	1	More extensive feedback has a better effect than concise or no feedback only in a minority of cases
	s					

Cont. **Appendix** 2

Teacher-feedback: degree of detail, specificity	p s	7 1	1	6 1		The degree of detail or the intensity of teacher-feedback does not seem to be important for the development of composition ability
Revision	p s	6	3	3		Revision - i.e. rewriting a composition after correction - may have some effect as far as technical abilities are concerned
Frequency of writing	p s	10 2	2 2	7	1	The frequency of writing practice per se is not of direct importance for the development of composition ability
Type of assignment	p s	12 1	8 1	3	1	Stimuli chosen or personally experienced by the student sometimes work better than material from other sources. Richer stimuli are better than poor ones.
Traditional grammar approach	p s	12	1	8	3	The effectiveness of the traditional grammar approach has not been demonstrated
Structural grammar approach	p s	6	1	4	1	There is little evidence for the assertion that the structuralist grammar approach is more effective than the traditional one
Transformational grammar approach	p s	5	2	3		Transformational grammar as (part of) writing instruction does not show more positive results than the traditional approach
Transformational sentence combining exercises	p s	10	6	3	1	Sentence combining exercises have a positive effect on sentence structure and on the overall quality of composition ability

* We distinguish investigations in which the experimental variable is the primary focus of attention and investigations in which this focus is secondary to the general attention paid to a number of experimental variables at the same time.

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Appendix 3: The Teacher-questionnaire on Instructional practices

Part 1: *Questions on pre-writing instruction*

1. How often do you use the following in teaching writing (to the students of this specific class)?

Exercises in spelling and punctuation

Exercises for syntactic variation and sentence style

Exercises in sentence combining

Exercises in the organization of paragraphs and whole compositions

Exercises in the development of organization: how to systematically treat a subject

Exercises in correcting and synthesizing materials from (reference) books and other sources

Exercises in the development of context: thinking about the topic and developing the composition ('heuristics')

Exercises in imagery, stylistics, making language concrete and illustrative

Exercises in the analysis of the audience of writing and exercises in writing for a specific audience

Exercises in different rhetorical types: narration and description

Exercises in different rhetorical types: argumentation and persuasion

Exercises in transformation of oral into written language

Exercises in free, spontaneous writing (short 5 minutes essays)

Part 2: *Questions on types of tasks and topics*

2. To what extent is each of the following writing tasks used in your teaching of writing to this class?

Fill out a form

Retell a story (heard or read)

Write a note

Resumé/summary

Paraphrasing

Personal story

Personal letter

Personal diary

Social letter

Formal business letter

Narrative report

Directions (e.g. for use)

Description, portrayal, delineation

Instruction (e.g. of rules of a game)

Telegram

Announcement, notice (e.g. for a meeting)

Circular

Project report/technical report

Letter of application

Advertisement

Letter of advice

Statement of personal views, opinions

Word portrait or sketch

Short story, narration

Personal essay

Book review (criticism, analysis, e.g. book-report)

Analysis of a poem

Critical essay

Drama, play

Dialogue

Poem/poetry

3. To what extent are the following characteristics applicable to your writing instruction (in this specific class)?

I let my students write on topics they come up with themselves

I let my students write on topics I give; they can choose out of topics I give

I make sure my students write on a wide variety of topics

I use a single topic or title as stimulus material for the assignments

I use a beginning or an ending sentence as stimulus material

I use pictures as stimulus material

I use movies, television, filmstrips, slides as stimuli

I use music or sound effects as stimulus material

I use poems as stimulus material

I use a collection of non-literary (informative) texts on a specific subject as stimulus material

The students collect their information on a specific topic themselves before they start writing

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Part 3: *Questions on characteristics of writing instruction*

4. To what extent are the following characteristics applicable to your writing instruction?

My teaching of writing is highly structured and organized with a pre-determined program

In my class writing is a school-subject: students learn to write in scholastic situations on a scholastic task (assignment)

In my class writing is primarily individual work where each student writes his/her own compositions

My students write on a topic unprepared, without gathering extra information from various sources

In my teaching I devote attention to the stages of the writing process (planning, writing, editing)

In my teaching of writing I devote attention to technical aspects and sub-skills of writing (spelling, syntax, style, organization of a composition)

I prepare my students by discussing the topic with the class and by collecting words and phrases which are related to the topic

My teaching of writing is improvised, connected with other activities in school, without a clearly pre-determined program

In my class writing is as functional as possible: students write in realistic situations with a real purpose and to a real audience

My students work in small groups. They write a joint composition

My students prepare their compositions in group-work. They work together while brainstorming, outlining, and revising, but they write their own essay

In my class my students first gather information on the topic they are going to write about

I prepare my students by discussing the topic and making an outline in class, before they start writing

In my writing instruction I let the students discuss and brainstorm before writing, to collect and generate information on the topic

5. How much time a month do students in this class typically spend on the writing of essays/compositions?

In class: As homework:

6. How much time does the typical writing task take in this class?

Part 4: *Questions on materials used and aids*

7. To what extent is each of the following materials used to teach the students to write compositions. Check all that apply and include both published textbooks and materials you create/select yourself.

Selected essays written by other pupils (somewhere else in the world) for analysis and critique in class

Selected essays written by professional authors to be studied as examples (rhetoric texts)

A collection of readings on a variety of subjects for analysis and critique

A selection of compositions written by the students themselves used as materials for analysis and critique

A text(book) or instruction with general guidelines or prescriptions for writing a composition

Published criteria for good writing; e.g. official examination criteria, scoring guides, scored sample essays

Media like newspaper, films, television

Programmed materials or computer assisted instruction

Part 5: *Questions on feedback*

8. Who primarily gives the students in this class comments and suggestions on the papers they have written? For each indicate how frequently the method is used.

Students receive feedback (comments, suggestions, corrections) from the teacher

Students receive feedback form one or more other teachers or assistants

Students receive feedback from other students (their peers, their class-mates)

Students receive feedback by means of self assessment

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9. When is most feedback given to the student?

During the time they are writing
Immediately after writing (till three days later)
Shortly after (4-7 days)
Long after (8 days or more after)

10. How is feedback given?

(When given by teacher/other adult):

Feedback is presented to the student individually in written form: they receive their own marked/corrected compositions to read over

Feedback is presented to the students in individual conferences between teacher and student

Feedback is presented to the class as a whole: the most important errors, made by various students, are discussed by the teacher

Other ways of giving feedback (please specify):

(When given by peers/classmates):

Feedback is given by peers in a small group discussion

Feedback is given by peers in a special feedback-form

Other ways (please specify):

11. Below are a number of ways by which teachers mark or comment upon student compositions. Indicate how frequently you use each method with this class

I assign a number, letter grade, judgement (good, excellent) without any comments

I assign separate numbers, grades or judgements to several aspects of the composition (e.g. content, mechanics, style)

I give a general comment at the end of the essay (written, global information in the qualities of the essay in 2 or 3 lines)

I give detailed comments, notes, in the margin and/or between the lines

I give detailed comments on only one specific aspect of the essay (e.g. content, organisation, style, mechanics, etc.)

I give comments on strengths and weaknesses and indicate different types of weak spots, mistakes, with symbols and signs in correction code familiar to the students

I give comments on strengths and weaknesses and indicate different categories of mistakes in the text and on a separate checklist which summarizes all the main types of problems

I point out some aspect of strength in each student's writing

I give only positive comments at the end of the essay and make no corrections

I give comments and suggest corrections. After that the students revise their compositions: they write a 'final-draft'.

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